

Message Text

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61

ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, VE

SUBJ: CONGRESS ELECTS NEW COMPTROLLER GENERAL

REF: CARACAS 8195

1. THE VENEZUELAN CONGRESS MEETING IN JOINT SESSION JULY 6 ELECTED DR. JOSE ANDRES OCTAVIO AS THE NEW COMPTROLLER GENERAL SUCCEEDING JOSE MUCI ABRAHAM WHO RESIGNED JUNE 16. OCTAVIO WILL SERVE THE BALANCE OF MUCI'S TERM, I.E. UNTIL 1979. AD FLOOR LEADER JAIME LUSINCHI TOLD THE CONGRESS THAT AD HAD INTENDED TO PROPOSE THE NAME OF ANDRES AGUILAR, LEGAL ADVISER TO PETROVEN, AND OCTAVIO FOR THE POST OF COMPTROLLER GENERAL, BUT THAT AGUILAR HAD ASKED THAT HIS NAME NOT BE PUT FORWARD. THEREFORE, ONLY OCTAVIO WAS CONSIDERED BY THE CONGRESS.

2. OCTAVIO'S NOMINATION WAS APPROVED WITH THE VOTES OF AD, URD, PCV, CCN, AND OPINA. COPEI AND FDP VOTED AGAINST OCTAVIO WHILE MEP, MAS, MIR, AND THE PEREZJIMENISTA INDEPENDENTS ABSTAINED. COPEI SENATOR GODOFREDO GONZALEZ STATED THAT COPEI HAD BEEN PREPARED TO SUPPORT AGUILAR BUT COULD NOT SUPPORT OCTAVIO SINCE AD HAD NOT CONSULTED SUFFICIENTLY WITH COPEI PRIOR TO NOMINATING OCTAVIO. MAS AND MIR INDICATED THEY WOULD ABSTAIN IN THE VOTING BECAUSE OF LACK OF CONSENSUS WITH REGARD TO OCTAVIO WHILE MEP DEPUTY SIUBERTO MARTINEZ EXPRESSED DOUBTS WHETHER OCTAVIO COULD BE INDEPENDENT GIVEN HIS PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE AS COUNCIL OF SIX PETROLEUM COMPANIES.

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3. JOSE ANDRES OCTAVIO WAS BORN AUGUST 5, 1919, IN BOCONO,

TRUJILLO STATE. A GRADUATE OF THE CENTRAL UNIVERSITY (UCV), OCTAVIO IS A SPECIALIST IN TAX LAW AND A PROFESSOR AT THE UCV LAW SCHOOL. ALTHOUGH NOT KNOWN TO THE EMBASSY, OCTAVIO IS REPORTEDLY HIGHLY REGARDED FOR PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY. OCTAVIO HAS REPRESENTED THE VENEZUELAN INSTITUTE OF TAX LAW AT SEVERAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES AND IS A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND PRESIDENT OF THE LATIN AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF TAX LAW. HE HAS SERVED ON SEVERAL VENEZUELAN COMMITTEES DEALING WITH TAX LEGISLATION INCLUDING ONE WHICH HELPED TO DRAFT THE ORGANIC LAW FOR THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S OFFICE PASSED BY THE CONGRESS IN 1975.

4. COMMENT: AD, IN ITS HASTE TO ELECT A NEW COMPTROLLER GENERAL, SUPRISINGLY DECIDED TO PROCEED WITHOUT COPEI'S AGREEMENT. ONLY THROUGH THE MOST UNLIKELY OF COALITIONS---AD SUPPORTED BY THE COMMUNIST PCV, CENTRIST URD, AND RIGHTIST CCN-- WAS OCTAVIO'S ELECTION BROUGHT ABOUT. IT APPEARS THAT OCTAVIO IS WELL QUALIFIED FOR THE DIFFICULT POSITION HE IS ASSUMING.
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